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Mahathir-problems

MSC ON TRACK, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, July 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir today said the landmark Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project is not facing any major problems.

All infrastructures needed in the 750 sq km area south of here were being put in place as planned, he told reporters after launching the Concept Request for Proposals (CRFPs) for first four of the seven MSC flagship applications here.

World-wide enthusiasm for the MSC proved that it was well accepted, said Dr Mahathir expressing satisfaction with the progress of the multi-billion ringgit project.

"The support is very good and the participants are very contributive. As you can see we have seen considerable progress in an area which has no previous model and we are pioneering practically in everything," he said.

Asked whether the infrastructures are adequate, Dr Mahathir said: "Obviously the demand is going to increase all the time...even if it is adequate now, it won't be adequate tomorrow. So we are putting in more and more facilities."

He said all the nine telephone companies in the country were keen in developing the infrastructure in the MSC.

"The problem in Malaysia is that we have more fibre optics in place than being used because many companies are putting in their own phone lines."

He said initially Malaysia expected 200 international companies to participate in the MSC but the figure would subsequently increase due to overwhelming response.

For the first year alone, 90 applications, both from foreign and local companies, have been received.

Dr Mahathir said that 15km by 50 km space provided in the MSC was adequate and should not be an issue.

"Some companies would not need very big space, what is needed is just a place for some communication equipment for them to do business with the rest of the world," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the first building in the MSC, the CyberView office, was already up in just 21 days.

The next building, which is the Multimedia University, will be completed by next year, he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, confirmed that the new Malaysian international passport -- to be embedded with a special microchips as security options -- would be launched as scheduled next month.

He said the new features would help curb tampering and forgery of Malaysian passports.

On the political front, Dr Mahathir was asked whether he regretted Cambodian second Prime Minister Hun Sen's rejection of an Asean solution to the political crisis in that country.

Dr Mahathir said he could not comment because it was only reported by the media.

"He did not communicate with me...what he said is reported by the press, maybe right maybe wrong. We don't usually make a decision based on that," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he would like to know what Hun Sen actually meant by

his statement and that Malaysia was presently still in contact with
Cambodia. -- BERNAMA
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